

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	29/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC066796
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Registered person address	Wakefield Council, County Hall, Bond Street, WAKEFIELD, West Yorkshire, WF1 2QW

Responsible individual	Mark Barratt
Registered manager	Ian Henderson
Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm

Inspection date	29/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC066796

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Most young people experience positive times at the home.
- Young people benefit from good outreach support, emergency and long-term accommodation. They feel well cared for and a number have made good progress from their starting points.
- Young people are cared for by good, positive adult role models that have developed strong, trusting relationships with them. The genuine care and emotional warmth shown towards young people help them to feel wanted.
- Young people feel safe. Strong collaborative working relationships between the home, safeguarding agencies and families help, protect and monitor young people, shielding them from significant harm.
- Good educational and health support enables most young people to engage in the relevant services. Those that do engage significantly improve their life chances.
- Young people benefit from good care delivered by a well-established, suitably experienced, trained, supported and motivated staff team. Their child-focussed and supportive approach ensures that young people are maintained at the heart of their good practice.
- Leadership and management has many positive qualities that underpin young people's good overall experiences, progress and their help and protection. However, this area requires improvement.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Ensure that after consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must- (a) Take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1) (a)). Specifically review the fire risk assessment and install self-closing devices on all fire doors in the home	31/12/2015
Ensure if a person has previously worked in a position involving work with children or vulnerable adults, verification so far as reasonably practicable of the reason why the employment or position ended. (Regulation 32(3)(d))	31/12/2015
The registered person must - (a) keep the Statement of Purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; (b) notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)). Specifically ensure that the Statement of Purpose provides an accurate description of services provided to young people	31/12/2015
The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating – (a) the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45(2) (a)). Specifically, the monitoring review report is evaluative and makes clear how the quality of care provided by the home demonstrates improved outcomes for young people.	31/12/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- All children's case records must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.3). Specifically, that confidential information about young people is securely maintained.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This home forms part of a wider range of provision and outreach support that is offered to children, young people and their families in the community.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
14/10/2014	Full	Good
05/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
13/06/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people benefit from good outreach support and emergency and longer term placements. The information shared with young people when they move into the home ensures they understand how they will be cared for. A social worker said, 'She was happy to come to (Name of the home) and knew what to expect.' Young people profit from good quality, personalised care that recognises and promotes their strengths and difficulties. Their diverse characters and personalities are distinctly understood by staff who can competently meet their needs. They act as caring parental role models, helping young people to feel safe, secure and well looked after. Young people describe the home as being 'A nice place to be' and 'A safe place.' Staff member's strong engagement skills have nurtured good quality and reliable relationships with young people. This is supported by the Registered Manager's view, which is to, 'Be there and make them aware that we are here to talk and listen.' The trust developed between young people and staff enable them to talk about their feelings and sensitive matters. A young person said, 'There are loads of different staff to talk to.' Young people generally relate well to each other, which promotes an amicable environment. One said that although they know how to complain, 'I don't think it's needed.' An independent advocate is a regular visitor to the home. The time they spend with young people enables their wishes and feelings to be heard and acted on as appropriate. This promotes and respects their rights. Young people's future prospects improve due to their access to school, alternative and vocational provisions. Some young people are predicted to attain good exam grades and those studying towards 'A' levels continue to thrive. Similarly, young people whose educational attendance has been inconsistent are increasing their attendance and making steady progress. This maximises their chances of working towards the subject they enjoy so they can reach their potential. A social worker said about a young person's progress, 'She can achieve'. Staff actively encourage and facilitate young people's involvement in educational meetings and interviews, which helps them to take responsibility for the choices they make. Good, collaborative home and education relationships ensure that barriers to young	

people's educational advancement are quickly resolved. A young person said, 'They help me with my education.' Young people are praised for their achievements, leading to nominations at a future awards ceremony. A young person has an opportunity through their educational provision to visit America, which has the potential to broaden their horizons and experiences.

Young people make good use of opportunities to participate in a range of leisure activities. For example, visits to the cinema and having meals and trips out, and attending cultural events that socially integrate them into community life. Some young people enjoy spending time with friends and some of their activities have been funded by the home. Young people's indoor activities, such as watching DVD's, using the computer and playing board games for hours helps them to relax. The arts and crafts resources available in the home stimulate young people's creativity and learning. For example, developing a montage to remember members of the armed forces who died in the line of duty ('Remembrance Day'). Celebrations for Halloween are underway with the spooky décor and planned 'Scare fest' weekend.

Young people's health and wellbeing is actively promoted through the effective relationships between the home and health partners. For most young people, their access to a range of health services promptly meets their holistic health needs. Others are waiting for further assessments. Staff provide emotional support when young people need it and have gone the 'extra mile.' This ensures their care and protection during sensitive times, which on one occasion was described by the Registered Manager as, 'Well planned, well-structured and well supported.' This view is supported by the 'looked after children's nurse', who said, 'An awful lot of work has been done with (Name of child) around her health issues.' Young people are sufficiently advised about sexual health issues and the negative effects of smoking, taking illegal drugs, legal highs and drinking alcohol. However, those young people presenting with risky behaviours choose not to take the advice, which places their health at risk.

Young people's positive sense of identity and heritage is reinforced by their contact with family and friends. Good partnerships between staff, parents and social care professionals help to resolve any concerns, this benefits everyone.

Young people have acquired independence skills that help them to do more for themselves. For example, completing domestic tasks and taking care of their personal appearance. Their independence is harnessed through good staff support, encouragement and partnership work with leaving care services. A social worker said, '(Name of the home) has worked to get her ID and drivers licence to open a bank account.' For some young people, the transition to an appropriate placement

has been slower than anticipated. This has resulted in a young person's extended stay. Although the arrangement falls outside of the current Statement of Purpose, it is considered to be in their best interests.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people's safety and welfare is secured by the effective multi-agency practices that promote a sound safeguarding culture. Included is the implementation of the 'Signs of Safety' child protection model, which is championed at this home. Although it is early days, staff are helping young people to explore what they are worried about, what is going well and what needs to happen. This contributes to improving their feelings of safety and is affirmed in their views. One young people rate their safety as 'eight or nine out of ten' and another said that they feel, 'Safe and protected.' Professionals and parents consider the young people to be safely cared for and they raise no safeguarding concerns. A social worker said, 'They are doing everything they can. (Name of young person) knows that and knows that people want to keep her safe.' Young people do not report bullying. One young person said there is, 'No bullying here. Everyone is nice.' Good risk management strategies focus on and address the high risk behaviours that young people present. Some young people do not show any specific triggers, which increases risk and makes it more challenging for staff to evaluate their responses. This is countered by the staff team's good relationships with the young people and their in-depth knowledge about them. The teams' collaborative practices with professionals and families also help them to manage identified risks. A parent said, 'They are doing everything they can.' A restorative approach to behaviour management helps young people to understand the negative impact of their behaviour on others. This has proved successful for those who have reflected on their behaviour and express remorse. Staff members' positive parenting and mentoring skills lean to young people's better nature. This helps them to develop socially acceptable mannerisms. A social worker said, 'She struggles to regulate her own behaviour, but there is a reduction in her damaging items in the home.' Staff are good at managing young people's behaviour, making beneficial use of	

training, experience and de-escalation skills. This has resulted in relatively few sanctions since the change of the home's function in February 2015. They are regularly reviewed to ensure they are fair and proportionate. No young people have been restrained since December 2014. One young person said that staff, 'Are allowed to restrain if hurting myself or them.' However, a concern regarding a recent police intervention involving the use of CS gas to disarm a young person is being followed up by the provider with the police. This is intended to enable further discussion and to agree on an acceptable protocol, moving forward. A full response to the regulator, Ofsted is expected as a result of this concern.

Young people who go missing from home without authority are safeguarded by the practices that serve to protect them. A social worker said, 'She does return on her own accord. She clearly recognises this as a place of safety.' Staff practices are highly proactive and they go out searching for young people, make contact with them or known sources to ensure their safe and timely return. This practice is known to young people, parents and professional partners. They recognise that staff are worried and care about the young people when they run. A parent said that staff, 'Report him missing straight away, they follow him.' The missing from home co-ordinator said that staff, 'Often find them before we do.' The 'safe and well' and 'return home' interviews are offered to young people. This provides an independent means for them to express their rationale for going missing. Strategy meetings further safeguard young people that go persistently missing. The effective and well co-ordinated home and partner agency interventions have resulted in no young people currently presenting on the child sexual exploitation register. Young people's sense of safety and welfare is significantly enhanced by these good practices.

Regular checks on the fire equipment and gas and electrical appliances ensure suitably safe health and safety systems. However, the kitchen fire door has not been identified in the home's fire risk assessment as requiring a self-closing restrictor in the event of a fire. The home is addressing this matter.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
Young people and staff benefit from a child-centred management team that has provided them stability since they joined forces two years ago. The manager has	

been registered with Ofsted since March 2014. He has held previous management roles in another children's home and has significant children's residential experience spanning over 22 years. He is suitably qualified to carry out the management role, having attained the Level 5 Diploma in management. The manager is fully suited and committed to his role. He is proud of the developments made so far, embracing the new inspection framework. A social worker said, 'I have not met anyone more committed than (Name of the Registered Manager).' He is supported by two competent and experienced assistant managers and a diverse staff team. They share his vision and commitment to make a positive difference to young people's and their families' lives.

The Statement of Purpose was changed in February 2015 from a long-term children's home to a service that states in its Statement of Purpose, 'Provides short-term assessment admissions, respite care for young people and their families. Families that are experiencing crisis and require intervention and support with a clear purpose to return children back to the family home or other appropriate accommodation.' The manager and staff have welcomed the new ways of working under the Statement of Purpose. The manager said, 'The Statement of Purpose gives the service a new lease of life. I love it!' and 'The changes are the best for the children.' However, the Statement of Purpose is currently under review to ensure it provides an accurate description of all services provided to young people.

A young person who lived at the home before the change of the remit remains accommodated there. They express satisfaction with their care, safety, feel consulted and continue to thrive educationally. The young person said, 'I have kind of got used to people coming in and out.'

Independent scrutiny of the home's performance by an independent visitor ensures consultation with young people, staff and relatives. The monitoring confirms a well-run and safe environment for young people to live. The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and their plan to counter most identified weaknesses secures service improvements. However, the monitoring review report submitted to Ofsted provides insufficient evaluation. This makes it unclear how the home demonstrates improved outcomes for young people. Personnel records do not make provision for contacting previous employers from childcare or vulnerable adult positions to verify the reasons why their employment ended. This does not assure robust recruitment practices. Not all young people's information has been securely stored to ensure the confidentiality of them and others. Although there is no negative impact on young people's safety and welfare; these shortfalls require improvement.

Young people are cared for by a team of well-established, experienced and suitably

trained adults that are valued by the management team. Although very busy, they are well motivated and committed to making the new service work for the young people in their care. Staff speak highly about their support and training. They said, 'I'm really enjoying it. It's always good to go back to basics' and 'There is so much training.' Good team communication, such as team meetings, daily handovers and regular supervision ensures a clear focus on young people's needs and progress.

Young people and their families do profit from the mutually strong partnerships between the home and the intensive support social work team. This forms the backbone of the staff team's work. This is enhanced by the well integrated relationships with other professional stakeholders and ensures their regular attendance at key meetings relating to young people. The home is highly regarded by a range of professionals. A social worker said, 'I can't speak highly enough of them.' Another social worker consulted by the home said, 'The staff are very professional, are a pleasure to work in partnership with. The management team are 'outstanding' and this is reflected in the performance of the team.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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